

Ivy's Story [Graduated from The Haven in 1998]

It was a ten-year process for me to get to The Haven on June 5, 1998. I had been discharged from two inpatient treatment programs and spent a year in outpatient treatment. I'd be sober for two years and then relapse. I realized the more I was in and out of treatment, the more bridges I burned. I knew when I entered The Haven I'd have to do something different. I used every drug available. I was a heroin addict. I preferred pharmaceutical methamphetamine and cocaine. I had been married three times: I call them pharmaceutical unions. My brother and I were battered as kids and that taught me to be a battered wife. I moved into relationships that were abusive. I couldn't work after I started bottoming out in 1987. My last real job before The Haven lasted from 1982 to 1987. Then we did nine moves in two years, left Michigan and ended up in Tucson.

My kids were drug through the addiction with me. I still get lots of anger from my son. He wants no contact with me. I used to drown in guilt regarding my kids and what I was doing to them, and later, what I had done to them.

I had been in treatment so much before The Haven; I knew the [treatment] language. I could be a model client, before I was very defiant. I had done little that they asked and then relapsed. Defiance is still strong in me. At The Haven I felt really safe. I was here for eight months and did not want to leave. I started taking direction from my sponsor. She has been my sponsor for nine years now. I focused on myself and got honest. My counselor was great. She helped me to start to heal and to surrender. (I was powerless when I used but never believed it before.) I was tired of living the way I used to. I started using resources [in the recovery community] such as Cocaine Anonymous. I started my Twelve Step work and continue that today. I lead the AA meeting at Vida Libre for a year. A year after graduating from The Haven I started driving Haven women to meetings. I am now part of the working structure (recording secretary) of CA Intergroup. I have been working steadily since leaving The Haven.